

S-336  
Jones Choice  
Venton vicinity  
private

c. 1815, c. 1850

"Jones Choice" is architecturally and historically significant for several reasons. The three-part "telescope" house is one of only a few to remain standing in this northern neck of Somerset County along the Little Monie Creek. While the first floor of the old kitchen obviously dates to the early nineteenth century, (c.1810-1830), the other two sections were built during the mid nineteenth century. This aspect of the house illustrates an important point in terms of the development of the stepped form of dwelling in Somerset County and the lower Eastern Shore. The main house follows the traditional side hall/parlor plan, and it is fitted with fine examples of mid nineteenth-century craftsmanship, especially the ramped mahogany stair. The Federal period woodwork in the old kitchen is an important survival as well.

Historically, "Jones Choice" has notable family associations with the Jones and later Waller families. Patented to William Jones by 1663, portions of the Monie Creek lands were passed down through family hands until the early nineteenth century. This section of "Jones Choice" bordering the Little Monie Creek passed to John Jones of Robert (c.1740-1799), who served as a Second Lieutenant of Monie Company of the Princess Anne Battalion. The old kitchen probably dates from the ownership of Robert Jones, whose brother sold the land out of the family in 1826. The dwelling achieved its current form under the ownership of Robert J. Waller, a prominent Somerset County farmer through the mid to late nineteenth century.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. S-336

Magi No. 2003365404

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Jones Choice

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number Drawbridge Road ☐ not for publicationcity, town Venton ☒ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Somerset

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Donald and Florabel Mabe

street &amp; number Route 3, Box 48 Jones Choice telephone no.: 651-1751

city, town Princess Anne state and zip code Maryland 21853

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset Clerk of Court liber 314

street &amp; number Somerset County Courthouse folio 439

city, town Princess Anne state MD 21853

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. S-336

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

"Jones Choice," also known as the Robert Waller farm, is located along the north side of Little Monie Creek in northern Somerset County, Maryland. Road access is provided by Drawbridge Road, which intersects Black Road and Venton Road to join the Deal Island Road (MD Route 363). The house is located at the end of a farm lane. Facing north, the dwelling is oriented on an east/west axis.

Built in stages, the three-part frame house dates from the early to mid nineteenth century. The "telescope" style house is supported by a minimal stuccoed brick foundation, and it is uniformly sheathed with weatherboards. The medium pitched gable roofs are covered with asphalt shingles. A modern garage has been attached to the east end of the dwelling.

Estimated to date to the mid nineteenth century, the two-story, three-bay main house follows a side hall-parlor plan with the entrance in the east bay. A four-panel door finished with bold Victorian moldings is flanked on the west by two six-over-six sash windows. Covering the front entrance is a gable-front porch that was rebuilt along the same lines as the previous Greek Revival style porch. The porch posts support a pedimented gable front roof. The second floor is lighted by three six-over-six sash windows and the boxed cornice is trimmed with a bed and crown molding.

The west elevation of the main house has two six-over-six sash on each floor that flank the internal end chimney, and two four-over-two sash windows light the attic. The gable end is finished with a slightly molded bargeboard.

The south side of the house is similarly finished as the front with a side entrance and six-over-six windows. The four-panel door is topped by a three-light transom, and a gabled porch covers the entrance. The second floor is lighted by identical six-over-six sash windows. The east side of the main block is largely covered by a two-story, two-bay center section which is similarly detailed with six-over-six sash windows, boxed cornices and bed moldings.

Covering the east end of the center section is a two-story, one-bay by one room kitchen wing. Structural evidence indicates the first story of the kitchen is an early nineteenth-century structure that was later raised to a two-story height, perhaps around the time the other two sections were built. The east end of the kitchen has an exposed common bond brick firewall, and a shed addition was attached to the south side of the kitchen. The old shed addition has now been converted to a modern kitchen and the old kitchen is now a dining room. The garage extends to the east of the old kitchen.

Due to the delapidated condition of the house, the interior had to be reworked, but the significant woodwork was preserved. Located in the hall is a fine mahogany stair with a heavily turned newel post, turned and tapered balusters, a scrollwork stringer, and a ramped handrail. The stair rises to a second floor landing where it turns in two directions that lead to the second floor of the main house and the second floor of the middle section. The parlor has a

## 8. Significance

Survey No. S-336

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

"Jones Choice" is architecturally and historically significant for several reasons. First, the three-part "telescope" house is one of only a few to remain standing in this northern neck of Somerset County along the Little Monie Creek. While the first floor of the old kitchen obviously dates to the early nineteenth century (c. 1810-1830), the other two sections were built at the same time. This aspect of the house illustrates an important point in terms of the development of the stepped form of dwelling in Somerset County and the lower Eastern Shore in general. With a developmental history that dates to the late eighteenth century, the stepped or colonnaded house type became so popular by the mid nineteenth century that whole houses were conceived and built in the "telescope" form, rather than in individual stages. Other representative examples include Linden Hill (S-17), located in the Princess Anne Historic District, and the William Nelson Homestead (S-245), recently entered on the National Register. In comparison to the other examples in this group that have not been nominated, "Jones Choice" is one of the most significant survivals. The main house follows the traditional side hall-parlor plan and it is fitted with fine examples of mid nineteenth-century craftsmanship, especially the ramped mahogany stair. The Federal period woodwork in the old kitchen is an important survival as well.

Historically, "Jones Choice" has important local family associations with the Jones and Waller families. Patented to William Jones by 1663, portions of the Monie Creek lands were passed down through family hands until the early nineteenth century. This section of "Jones Choice" bordering the Little Monie Creek passed to John Jones of Robert (c. 1740-1799) who served as a 2nd Lieutenant of Monie Company of the Princess Anne Battalion. The current kitchen probably dates from the ownership of Robert Jones, whose brother sold the land out of the family in 1826. The dwelling achieved its current form under the ownership of Robert J. Waller, a prominent Somerset County farmer through the mid to late nineteenth century.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. S-336

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul Touart - Architectural Historian

organization Somerset County Historical Trust date 3/31/86

street &amp; number 424 N. Somerset Avenue telephone 651-0077

city or town Princess Anne state MD 21853

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

DESCRIPTION (continued)

Greek Revival style mantel with simple pilasters, a plain frieze and a thick mantel shelf. The floor remains intact and the baseboard has a stepped profile.

The other significant woodwork remains in the old kitchen. An enclosed winder stair is fixed in the northwest corner and retains flush beaded edge paneling, flush six-panel doors, and beaded board stair soffit. A small six-panel door opens into the small closet beneath the winder. Exposed within the corners of the rooms are the principal posts which are mortised and tenoned into the plate. Extra thick walls on the first floor and a single wall thickness on the second floor along with the early nineteenth century woodwork on the first floor indicates the first floor of the kitchen predates the rest of the house by several decades. The second floor of the kitchen wing appears to have been added at the same time the rest of the house was constructed. Remaining on the second floor of the kitchen is the Federal period balustrade with diamond cross-sectioned balusters, a slender square newel post and a narrow handrail.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The earliest reference to "Jones Choice" is found on the Lord Proprietor's Rent Roll dated March 20, 1663 which encompassed seven-hundred acres located between the Great and Little Monie creeks.<sup>1</sup> William Jones occupied his plantation for close to three decades and during this period William Jones was named one of the Justices of the Peace, an office which he served between 1676 and 1689.<sup>2</sup> After his death around 1690, the Monie Creek plantation passed to his second wife, Jane, and then his sons, John, Robert, and George. Through his father's will, John Jones, born in 1668, inherited the "Jones Choice" ground along the Little Monie. From John Jones, the property passed to a Robert Jones, and then to John Jones of Robert (c. 1740-1799).<sup>3</sup>

John Jones of Robert was listed on both the 1783 and 1798 tax assessments with over three-hundred acres of the "Jones Choice" patent. In 1798 John Jones's assessment included,

1 Dwelling house 45 by 18 feet one story brick, 4 windows 3 feet 6 inches long, 3 feet wide, 2 windows 3 feet 8 inches long, 2 feet 4 inches wide, out of repair, 1 kitchen 36 by 15 feet brick, 1 smokehouse 12 feet square, 1 milkhouse 12 by 8 feet, 1 cyder house 15 by 12 feet.<sup>4</sup>

After John Jones' death in 1799, his son, Robert evidently began a building program to replace his father's house, which by the turn of the nineteenth century had reached a state of disrepair. The current kitchen of the nominated house evidently dates from the period of Robert Jones' ownership with its Federal period woodwork. Robert Jones occupied the Little Monie plantation until his death in the early 1820s, and his administration account named his brothers, James and John as well as his brother-in-law, George Ormsby as the heirs.<sup>5</sup>

After the estate settlement the "land which belonged to the late Robert Jones of John, " was advertised in the Village Herald, " by his brother James Dashield Jones of the City of Baltimore.<sup>6</sup> Portions of "Jones Choice" were sold through the late 1820s and 1830s. A 150-acre parcel was transferred by James Jones to George M. Willing on October 3, 1826.<sup>7</sup> Ten years later the same tract was purchased by Ballard Reid. In the 1836 indenture, the description of the land includes, "it being the next ditch to the westward of

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

the house where Robert Jones formerly lived."<sup>8</sup>

However, Ballard Reid died within the following month, and the Monie Creek lands passed to his daughter, Nelly and her husband George B. Wallner.<sup>9</sup> Six years later, on January 25, 1842, the 150-acre farm was transferred to Robert J. Waller for \$500.<sup>10</sup> Robert J. Waller improved the old plantation house by adding the two larger sections of the "telescope" dwelling along with raising the roof of the old kitchen. The main house and middle section were fitted with Greek Revival period woodwork including a finely crafted mahogany stair. Robert J. Waller's initials "B. W. " thought to stand for Bob Waller, were found on a rafter of the main section. After Robert J. Waller's death in 1891, the property passed to his son, Robert, who sold the farm in 1912 for \$6,500.<sup>11</sup> Since the 1912 transfer, the property has been sold nine times. The current owners bought 148 acres and the house in 1979.<sup>12</sup>

Jones Choice footnotes

- 1 Clayton Torrence, Old Somerset on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Regional Publishing Company, 1979, p. 473.
2. Torrence, p. 395.
- 3 C. Clark Jones, Three Centuries in Maryland, A History of a Maryland Family, printed privately, 1976, p. 12.
- 4 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment, John Jones, Monie Hundred. Lists of Dwelling Houses, Lands and Slaves.
- 5 Somerset County Register of Wills, Somerset County Courthouse, Administration Account of Robert Jones of John, JP 9/50, July 1, 1823.
- 6 Village Herald, June 29, 1830.
- 7 Somerset County Land Records, Somerset County Courthouse, GH 3/336, October 3, 1826.
- 8 Somerset County Land Records, Somerset County Courthouse, GH 8/410, September 4, 1836.
- 9 Somerset County Wills, Somerset County Courthouse, JP 4/262, October 25, 1836.
- 10 Somerset County Land Records, AH/36, January 18, 1842.
- 11 Somerset County Land Records, SFD 62/53, December 11, 1912.
- 12 Somerset County Land Records, ITP 314/439, June 5, 1979.



— Jones Choice bibliography

Jones, C. Clark, Three Centuries in Maryland, A History of Maryland Family,  
printed privately, 1976.

1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment, microfilm, Somerset County Library.

Somerset County Administration Accounts, Somerset County Courthouse.

Somerset County Land Records, Somerset County Courthouse.

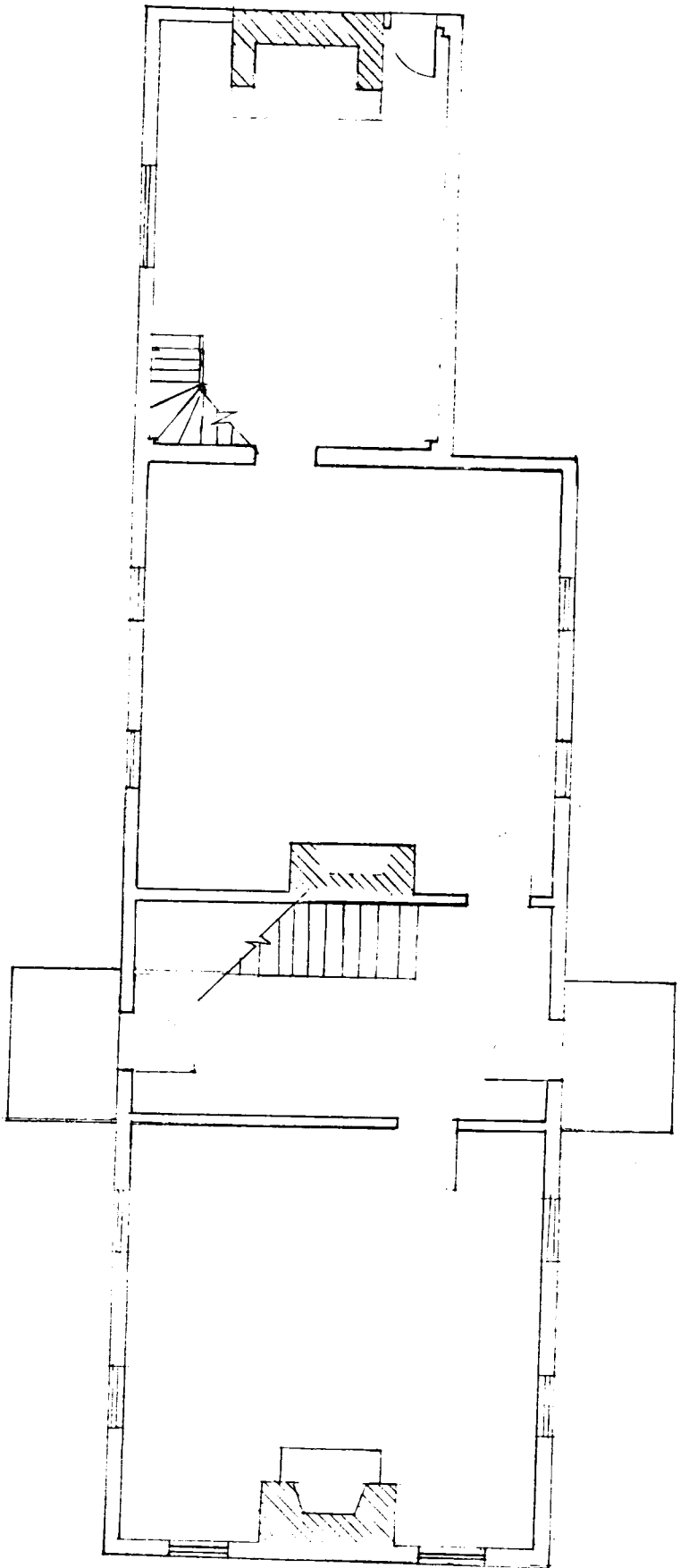
Somerset County Register of Wills, Somerset County Courthouse.

Torrence, Clayton, Old Somerset on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Regional  
Publishing Company, 1979.

Village Herald, June 29, 1830.

Boundary - Jones Choice

Beginning at a point along the east side of the Jones Choice farm lane and heading southwesterly for a distance of 450 feet to a point along the Little Monie Creek, thence the in easterly direction along said creek following the north bank for a distance of approximately 600 feet to a point along the north bank of said creek, thence in a northeasterly direction for 300 feet to a point to the northeast of the nominated dwelling, thence in a northwesterly direction running across the north side of the house for 412 feet to a point along the said farm lane, containing approximately 4.25 acres, more or less.



JONES' CHOICE  
1/8" - 1' 0" PBT

VENTON VICINITY S-336  
4-4-86

JOHN M.  
RUPP  
273/595  
19.00 A.  
P. 170

S-336

JERRY I.  
BEDSWO  
348/4  
13.00 A.  
P. 24

CHESAPEAKE CORP. OF VA.  
243/588  
34.75 A.  
P. 142

GLATFELTER PULP WOOD CO.  
255/497  
68.00 A.  
P. 153

P. 151

CHES  
CORP OF VA  
190/436  
24 A.  
P. 23

DONALD W. MABE  
314/439  
60.05 A.  
P. 160

P. 154

MONIE

DRAWBRIDGE

DONALD W. MABE  
314/439  
148.00 A.  
P. 158

JAMES W.  
PHILLIPS  
306/497  
37.85 A.  
P. 161

WALTER C. LAIRD  
266/687,  
338/451  
23.48 A.  
P. 156

JAMES P. GALLAHER  
295/267  
128.94 A.  
P. 22  
1 of 3

1" = 600'

CREEK

ANDERSON  
ANDERSON

Dist. No 1  
SOMERSET CO.

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*S. Cotman*

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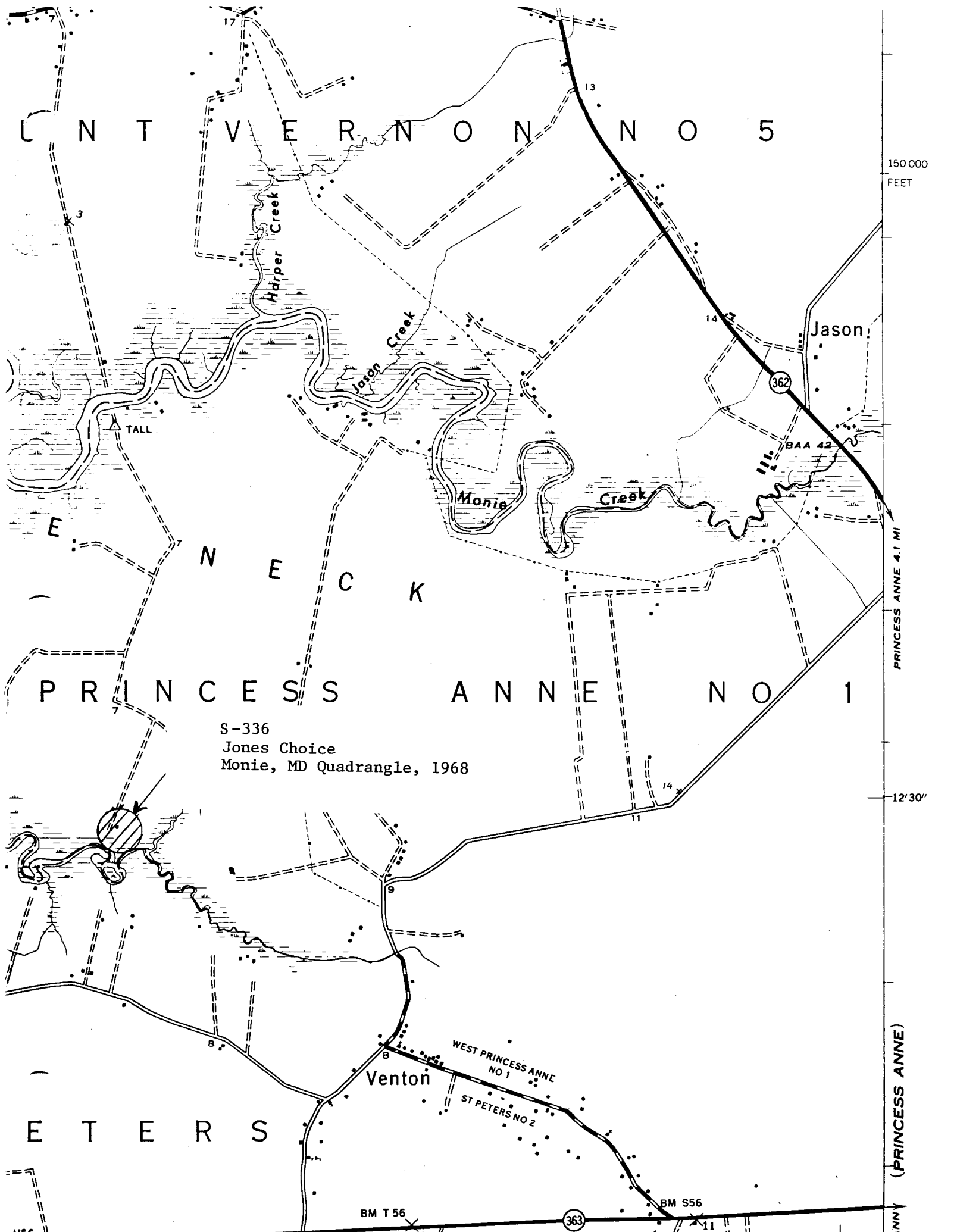
ET CO.  
*District  
& Co. Proprietors*

*J. Landing*

W. Keroll [redacted]  
 sing B. Keroll [redacted]  
 [redacted] W. Bennett



**STANDARD DATED.**



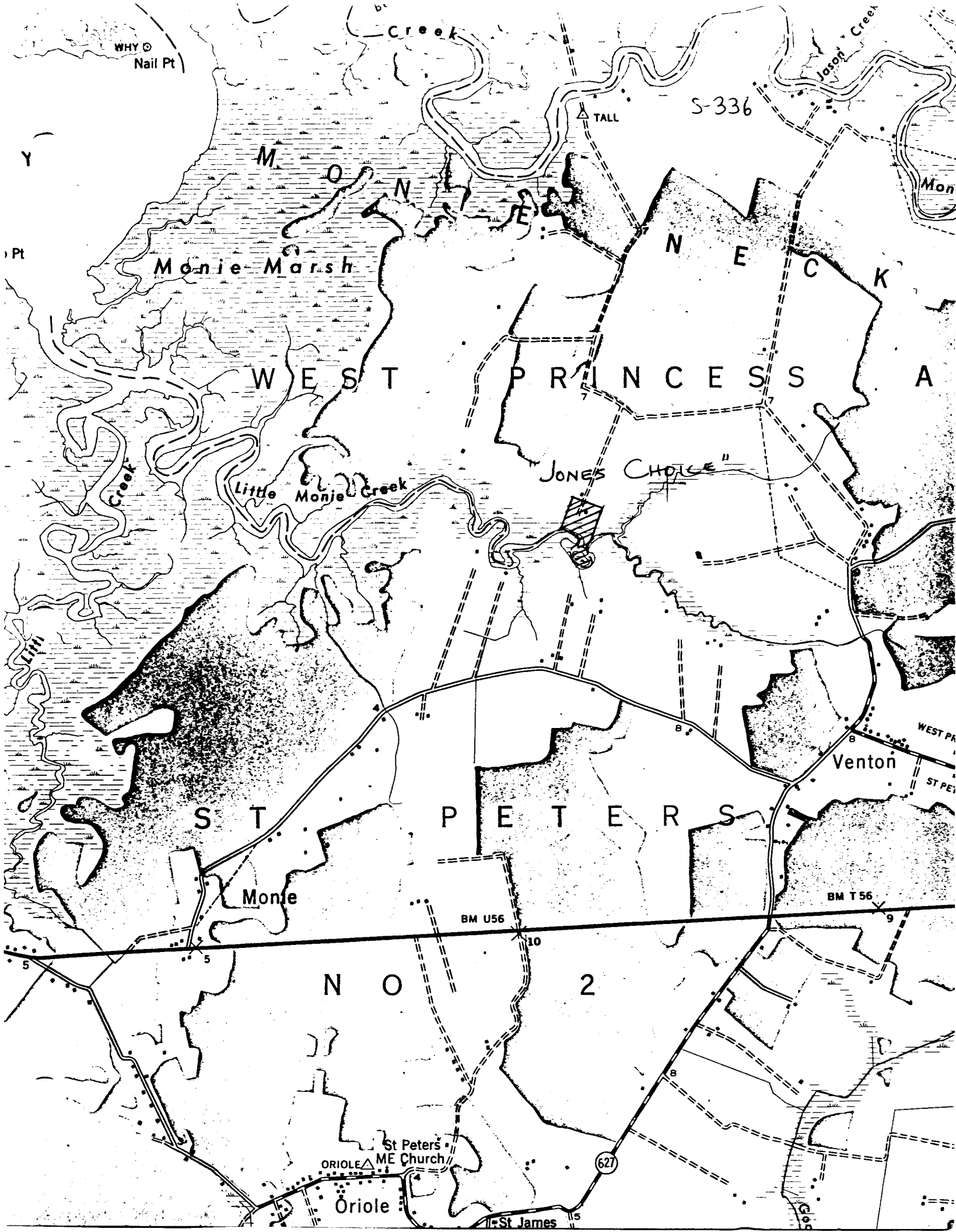
S-336  
Jones Choice  
Monie, MD Quadrangle, 1968

150 000  
FEET

PRINCESS ANNE 4.1 MI

12' 30"

ANNY (PRINCESS ANNE)







Jones Choice

S-336

Venton vicinity, Somerset Co., Maryland

Northwest Elevation

3/86, Paul Touart, Photographer

Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Jones Choice

S-336

Venton vicinity, Somerset Co., Maryland

Southwest Elevation

3/86, Paul Touart, Photographer

Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Jones Choice S-336  
Venton vicinity, Somerset Co., Maryland  
Back Stair  
3/86, Paul Touart, Photographer  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Jones Choice S-336  
Venton vicinity, Somerset Co., Maryland  
Back Stair  
3/86, Paul Touart, Photographer  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust

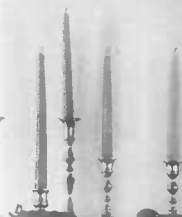




Jones Choice S-336  
Venton vicinity, Somerset Co., Maryland  
Principal Stair  
3/86, Paul Touart, Photographer  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Jones Choice S-336  
Venton vicinity, Somerset Co., Maryland  
Back stair  
3/86, Paul Touart, Photographer  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Jones Choice

S-336

Venton vicinity, Somerset Co., Maryland

Parlor Mantel

3/86, Paul Touart, Photographer

Neg./Md. Historical Trust